

# CIA not all 'spooks and spies,' says deputy director

1953 Roseburg High School graduate is  
No. 2 man in federal agency

By JEFF MIZE  
Of The News-Review

Working for the CIA involves a lot more than cloak-and-dagger projects, secret agents and electronic surveillance.

"It's not all spooks and spies," said Richard Kerr, a 1953 graduate of Roseburg High School and CIA deputy director since March 1989. "It's analysis of technical questions."

During a telephone interview from CIA offices in Langley, Va., Kerr said being the agency's No. 2 man includes having to grapple with budget headaches and personnel hassles. But the work is still far different than managing a Fortune 500 corporation.

"It's not routine, but a lot of it is things people would normally expect you to be doing," Kerr said. "If you kind of went through the world's problems according to newspapers, you would find very much the same agenda we have."

"The only thing different is that we bring secret information and a large analytical force to bear on these same problems."

Kerr, 55, was born in Fort Smith, Ark. After his parents divorced, he lived with his mother in different parts of California and Oregon before coming to Roseburg to live with his father and stepmother in 1949.

It was in Roseburg that he met his wife, the former Janice Sinclair, a fellow Roseburg High School graduate. The couple have four children.

Kerr said he comes back to Roseburg every couple of years and was in town earlier this year. He also attended the 25-year and 35-year reunions of his high school class. His stepmother, Catherine Kerr, and his mother-in-law, Mildred Chapin, still live in the area.

Kerr studied Russian history and earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Oregon. He never thought about working for the CIA until the day a recruiter set up a table at the university.



Richard Kerr  
Studied history at U of O

He joined the agency in 1960 as an analyst primarily working on the Soviet Union. As a junior intelligence officer during the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, he analyzed Soviet forces in Cuba and monitored the removal of missiles from the Caribbean.

More than 28 years later in Operation Desert Storm, Kerr was part of the so-called Deputies Committee, which included representatives from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the State Department, the Defense Department, the National Security Council and the CIA.

The group's chairman was Robert Gates, deputy national security adviser for President Bush and the man Bush has selected to replace William Webster as CIA director.

Kerr said the group met on a daily basis to develop policy recommendations for Bush. Before Operation Desert Storm started, the group concentrated on several issues, including keeping the alliance against Iraq together and analyzing the capabilities of the Iraqi forces.

The Washington Post \_\_\_\_\_  
The New York Times \_\_\_\_\_  
The Washington Times \_\_\_\_\_  
The Wall Street Journal \_\_\_\_\_  
The Christian Science Monitor \_\_\_\_\_  
New York Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
USA Today \_\_\_\_\_  
The Chicago Tribune \_\_\_\_\_  
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"One of the major issues was monitoring the effectiveness of the sanctions against Iraq," he said. "So the intelligence focused on what was moving to Iraq, who was moving it, and then trying to support the military and others, the State Department, in mopping it."

"Once the war actually began, then intelligence divides up and the military focuses on the tactical side — where

forces are, what damage is being done to them — and national intelligence tends to look at the larger issues — what's the overall effective impact of that, what is happening outside of Iraq."

On July 3, Bush presented Kerr and seven other senior government officials with Presidential Citizens Medals for their work in the Persian Gulf War. During a White House ceremony, Bush said the medals are usually presented to Americans for lifetime contributions.

"In Desert Storm, we have a watershed event, so unique, so singular ... that it is fitting, particularly before the day of our independence, that we recognize the exceptional service that was rendered by a special few," Bush said.

"I think everyone appreciates recognition," Kerr said about the honor. "It's particularly important when the president recognizes you personally."

Although the CIA was heavily involved in Desert Storm, Kerr said the agency still had to monitor other trouble spots in the world before and during the war.

"We had problems with Yugoslavia and problems with south Asia and the Soviet Union was fundamentally changing and Eastern Europe was changing," he said. "You just can't walk away from those."

After spending 30 years as a Soviet analyst, Kerr has seen dramatic changes in the country during the last five years. Still, he hesitates to make too many predictions about the future.

"I think what you can say with some degree of confidence is that it's not going to go back to the way it was," he said. "It may be chaotic and it certainly will be unstable, but it's not going to be a regime of the

past. It's fundamentally changed and it's going to change again."

Although he is keenly interested in Soviet affairs, Kerr has never traveled to the Soviet Union.

"There are reasons not to that would be fairly obvious," he said. "I am not at all inclined to want to talk to the KGB."

Kerr said he enjoys working for the CIA because the work is challenging and intellectually stimulating.

"It's got to be one of the best jobs in Washington, without question, in terms of being the thick of things," he said.

During the last 20 years, the CIA's image has been tarnished by disclosure of plots to assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro and, more recently, by the illegal diversion of funds in the Iran-Contra affair.

"The agency's involvement in it (Iran-Contra) from my perspective was very marginal," he said. "I think we get far more attention than in fact is fair or we deserve. Not that people shouldn't look at us because I think any intelligence organization needs fairly careful scrutiny."

Nevertheless, Kerr acknowledged that the scandal continues to damage the CIA's credibility.

"The biggest misconception is that it's an organization that doesn't have either a conscience or integrity," he said. "It's far more objective in my view than most of the other products ... including newspapers."